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ilarity with botanical literature than with other fields of work, and it is not to be presumed that botanists alone among the staffs of experiment stations have offended science and the Queen's English. It is felt that the inclusion, in circulars and bulletins, of statements of this sort is due entirely to a lack of criticism in the preparation of manuscripts. It is perhaps not fully realized that publications are permanent records which are to be regarded as the product of the institution as well as of the author, and that the character of the publication, for which the several officers of the station are jointly responsible, therefore reflects their joint ability.

In order to learn how much editorial and censorial supervision manuscripts receive and to what extent the individual members of the station staffs are actually responsible for the character of the publications, a questionnaire was sent to the director of each of the agricultural experiment stations. Forty-six replies were received. Five of these report that a special officer, known as publicist or editor, censors all manuscripts submitted for publication with respect both to form and to content, and that he, together with the directors, has the power to withhold or to reject any manuscripts submitted. In eighteen of the stations the director alone exercises this censorship. In twenty-three the manuscripts for all bulletins and circulars are submitted to an editorial committee. This committee is variously constituted but in conjunction with the director it exercises all the powers and prerogatives of a board of editors. Certain stations have a standing committee who edit all manuscripts, and others a special committee whose personnel consists of those officers most interested in the particular subject concerning which a publication is desired.

It is realized, of course, that there is a greater complexity of organization in the larger experiment stations than in the smaller. It might be granted too that there is a greater need for the organization of editorial committees in the larger institutions with their greater number of projects for investigation and consequently their greater number of pub-

lications. Naturally the officers in the several different departments will be less closely associated with each other and consequently less familiar with the nature of the various problems under investigation in the larger stations.

There are those, not in every station perhaps, who, through lack of ability to express themselves or through lack of training and experience in their own or related fields, would be spared the caustic criticism of their colleagues and of the reading public if their manuscripts had been subjected both to a constructive and to a destructive criticism prior to publication. Too much emphasis can not be placed on the fact that much of the value of a piece of work is lost if it is not carefully written both with respect to syntax and to the employment of such words as convey the author's intended shades and tints of meaning. One does not credit experimentation which is inaccurately reported. It only reflects discredit on the institution, on the author, and on the other members of the station staff. Experiment station publications can not attain the high standard of merit maintained by the scientific journals until a means is provided to secure adequate, critical, editorial supervision of all manuscripts. **FREDERICK A. WOLF**

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#### A SIMPLE TECHNIQUE FOR THE BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF SHELL EGGS

THE eggs are first immersed in a strong soap solution (the standard soap solution used in water analysis has been found to be very satisfactory) and scrubbed with a small brush to remove any adherent dirt and hen feces; then they are thoroughly dried in a clean towel and immersed in a mercuric chloride solution (1:1,000) and allowed to remain about five minutes.

The egg is now removed from the mercuric chloride solution, care being taken to handle it by the small end, and without drying it is put into 60-70 per cent. alcohol, where it is allowed to remain a few minutes.

Again handling the egg by the small end it is placed upon a three-inch clay triangle (which

has been previously flamed to insure sterility) large end down and the alcohol ignited by quickly passing a flame under the egg. The success of the method from this point on depends upon the formation of a drop of water from the alcohol (60-70 per cent. alcohol has been found most satisfactory) on the bottom (large end) of the egg.

When the alcohol has burned off, a very hot flame (Tirrell burner) is directed at the drop of water on the under side of the egg and after sufficient heating a piece of the egg shell from 1 to 2 cm. in diameter snaps off. In some cases the vitelline membrane is broken at this point and the contents of the egg run out, so it is necessary to have a container ready for use.

If the vitelline membrane does not break at this point or all the contents do not run out, it is only necessary to apply the flame gently to the top (small) end of the egg when the expansion of the air will totally empty the shell. Care must be taken at this point not to burn the egg shell or coagulate the contents. This heating should be done with a nearly luminous flame.

The most satisfactory type of receiver is a large Phillips beaker which has been previously sterilized with a sufficient quantity of broken glass in it to cover the bottom of the flask. This broken glass serves to cut up both the yolk and white and make a homogeneous mixture from which an average sample can be withdrawn and plated, using the usual precautions.

This method has the following advantages:

1. Simplicity. It eliminates the sterilization of instruments in opening the egg and simplifies the operation of breaking the shell.

2. It eliminates the chances of introducing foreign chemicals, which have been used for sterilizing the instruments for breaking the shell, into the egg.

3. It minimizes the chances of infecting the egg during opening and consequently allows of a more accurate determination of the bacterial count of the content.

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### QUOTATIONS

#### THE DISMISSAL OF PROFESSOR NEARING

THE issue which the trustees of the university of Pennsylvania have raised by their summary action in dispensing with the services of one of the most able and efficient professors of the Wharton School faculty is vastly more important than any considerations whatever affecting the personality or opinions of the teacher in question or of the members of the board itself. It is because the incident reveals the existence of an irrepressible conflict between two widely differing ideals of university responsibility and duties that it has called forth an instant and widespread protest. The *New Republic* recently defined this conflict as one "between political reaction and political progress, between intellectual repression and freedom of speech, between a plutocracy strongly intrenched and a democracy not yet fully conscious of itself." And the arguments that have been already volunteered in defense of the trustees, albeit they are themselves silent as to the reasons for their unusual action, fully justify the assumption expressed in every protest that the trustees ("the people who raise the money") regard "the expression of economic discontent as immoral," and are determined to penalize instead of encourage, on the part of the teaching staff, that "continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found."

One of the trustees, however, has modified the issue, if he has not raised an entirely new one, when he denied the right of the public or the alumni to demand any explanation of the governing body of the university. "No one has the right to question us" he is reported to have said. "The University of Pennsylvania is not a public institution. It is only quasi-public. We are answerable only to our own sense of duty and responsibility." This is true only in the most narrow and technical sense, and it is certainly not the position taken by the trustees when they approach the city and state for legislative favors and for grants